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Media Contact • Jill E. Dunne • Director of Marketing and Communications
513-639-2954 • media@cincyart.org
953 Eden Park Drive | Cincinnati, Ohio | 45202
www.cincinnatiamuseum.org

***Images Available Upon Request**

Cincinnati Art Museum embarks upon accessibility initiatives, including new front entrance ramp

CINCINNATI— The Cincinnati Art Museum is increasing its accessibility initiatives in 2019. One of the first visible changes will be a new ramp to the front entrance, allowing visitors in wheelchairs or with strollers to gain easy access to the front of the museum. Currently, the entrance for those with accessibility needs is the DeWitt entrance, at the rear of the museum facility.

The new front ramp is made possible through the generosity of the Joseph family of Cincinnati, and additional support was provided by the Fidelity Foundation.

Construction of the new front ramp begins February 25, and will be completed by the end of the summer. During the first six weeks of construction, the museum's front entrance will be closed all day Tuesday–Thursday, and Friday until 3 p.m. During those times, visitors will need to enter through the DeWitt entrance. The front entrance will be open Friday at 3 p.m. through Sunday, and daily after the first phase of construction is completed. The museum will be open during the entire construction process.

"The twenty-first century visitor to the Cincinnati Art Museum experiences state of the art museum interpretation, stellar art collections and intergenerational learning. Equity and inclusion, for people of all abilities, backgrounds, and life stages, is essential to these goals. Universal and equal physical access is a welcome advancement we are excited to complete for Cincinnati," said Cameron Kitchin, Cincinnati Art Museum's Louis and Louise Dieterle Nippert Director.

As part of its current 2016–2020 strategic plan, the museum has already expanded accessibility programming, created a cross-divisional accessibility committee and carried out staff trainings about welcoming all visitors.

Since 2015, the museum has doubled the number of patrons who attended accessibility programs. New programming includes a before-hours sensory-friendly program called Autism Family Exploration, and Custom Accessibility Tours, scheduled sensory tours for groups who are not able to attend our regularly scheduled programming.

The museum has offered some accessibility programming since 2011. Original programs include Connect for adults with developmental disabilities, Touch Tours for people who are blind or partially sighted and American Sign Language Tours for people who are deaf or have partial hearing.

Current accessibility initiatives are being evaluated through post program surveys with participants and conversations with partners. In 2018 the museum was named the Faces of Autism, Community Partner of the Year by the Autism Society of Greater Cincinnati.

"I'm really excited to work together to make the museum a more accessible place for those with different abilities. We want to make the museum a leader in accessibility. The committee will find ways that we can better welcome all kinds of visitors, and help them have the best experience possible while they are here," said Sara Birkofe, the museum's Manager of Accessibility & Gallery Programs.



In the fall, the museum hosted a staff accessibility training led by Child Psychologist Dr. Jennifer Smith from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Kelly O'Leary Center. They will continue on a quarterly basis and teach museum staff about welcoming all groups, people-first language and working with families with children who have autism and adults with developmental disabilities.

The museum has also created a social narrative and sensory friendly guide available online for visitors to review before their visit. Resources as well as information about programming can be found at cincinnatiartmuseum.org/access. Questions or suggestions about accessibility at the Cincinnati Art Museum can be sent to at access@cincyart.org.

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to Artswave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from The Rosenthal Family Foundation. Special exhibition pricing may vary. Parking at the Cincinnati Art Museum is free. The museum is open Tuesday – Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. and Thursday, 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Visit cincinnatiartmuseum.org for more information.

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